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WASHINGTON AT TARRYTOWN.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE TARRYTOWN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BY MARCIUS D. RAYMOND.

Tuesday Eve., December 16, 1890.

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This paper is published at this time and in this form so that the facts which it embodies may be better preserved, and in the hope that it may be the means of some awakened interest in our local history. And so it is presented to the members and friends of the Tarrytown Historical Society, with the compliments of the author and publisher.

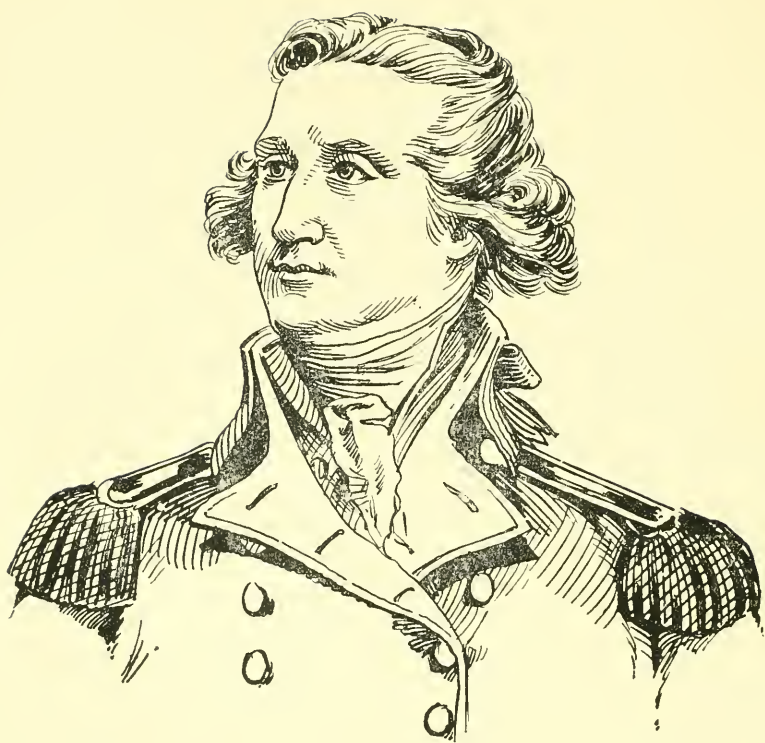
M. D. RAYMOND.

Tarrytown, N. Y., Oct. 30, 1893.

To the memory of the Patriots of Tarrytown

During the Revolution,

This volume is respectfully dedicated.



WASHINGTON AT TARRYTOWN.



THE gathering up of the fragments of our local history, of the leaflets of tradition, and their pious preservation from the ruthless devastation of time, is a sufficient justification for the existence of this Society. It is not a meaningless mission, a mere innocuous sentiment, a diversion, without worthy and useful aim and results; it is a means of instruction as well as a theme of interest. The present is but the projected past—the life evolved from yesterday, and throbbing with impulses received from it. Observing what is, we look for causes—we look backwards. And we find that nothing happens by chance. For instance, Tarrytown was not an accident. The mighty convulsions of nature that separated the rock-ribbed hills on the east from the west, and opened up a way for the waters of our noble River—and the broad Tappan Zee, environed by our castellated heights, with fertile slopes between inviting the sturdy Dutch burghers hither, was not an accident; it was Providence. And the rich legacy which has come down from them to us of faithful, patriotic, God-fearing, well-ordered lives, may well be prized as among our choicest treasures.

The story of those times, and of their lives can never fail to be of moment to us. The halo of romance and mystery which envelop them but adds to the charm of their ever fascinating interest. There can be but one early history of any place or people, and this place is peculiarly blessed in that the Fathers made and left it hallowed ground. There may have been rudeness and lack of culture among them, they may not have had the polish and learning of the schools, but they had the attractive garb of simplicity, the sturdy, rugged virtues

that make for manhood and character, and so long as the quaint spire of the old Dutch Church where they worshipped points heavenward, and the venerable tomes of its records are preserved, and God's acre, where their sacred dust reposes remain, so long shall their memory be cherished.

And this treasure trove of history and legendary lore is shared and prized by others as well as ourselves. On remarking recently to a youth in Southern Ohio, that we were from Tarrytown; "Oh, yes," he replied, "That is historic ground." How much the arms of Washington and the genius of Irving have served to make it so.

The history of Tarrytown while yet a part and parcel of the Manor of Phillipsburg, is in itself a distinct era, and may well be entitled the Patriarchal period. It was pre-eminently pastoral and peaceful; the tending of the flocks and the cultivating of the fields, with no greater ambition than neighborhood influence and rural prosperity. Then came the shock and upheaval of the Revolution. And to their everlasting honor be it recorded, that notwithstanding the fact that the Lord of the Manor was in accord with the King, there were but few Tories in this vicinage. From the first, the tenantry were in full sympathy with the cause of the Colonies, and although sore trials were in store for them,—their fields devastated, their property wasted and the tragedy of war enacted at their doors, its rude alarms and terrible realism did not serve to repress their patriotism or awe them into submission. The British General Howe could not well have paid them a higher compliment than when he said, after his fruitless movement in this direction in 1777, "I can do nothing with this Dutch population; I can neither buy them with money, nor conquer them by force." And then, again, later in the same year, date of Nov., 1777, their persistent patriotism elicited that infamous brutal order from the Royal Governor Tryon, *to burn Tarrytown!* Which, however, happily, in the face of the ringing defiance of General Parsons of the Continental Army, he had not the temerity to undertake.

But what less of sturdy patriotism and courage could have been expected of the descendants of the heroic Netherlanders

who under William the Silent maintained for 30 years successful resistance against the most powerful and cruel despotism of the 17th century in Europe, and by their glorious deeds forever immortalized the annals of the Dutch Republic.

The Revolutionary period was indeed of thrilling local interest, the records of much of which yet remain to be gathered up, and it is not strange that the connection with it of the name of Washington, whose fame the genius of our own Irving has made to shine with brighter lustre on our country's annals, should give an added glow to the history and tradition of that time; for Washington was repeatedly in Tarrytown, although "Washington at Tarrytown" is the broader theme of this paper.

THE MARY PHILLIPSE ROMANCE

Has served in some mystical way to connect the name of Washington with Tarrytown at an earlier date, and the following from an article by Wilson Cary Smith, in the *American Magazine of History*, for February, 1881, entitled "The Roger Morris House," is a bold attempt to bring the storied tale within the domain of history, in the averment that he passed through this place, if he did not stop here, in 1756, on the occasion of his meeting the fair and queenly daughter of the Lord of this Manor; and though the iconoclasts of history have repeatedly belabored this legend with their little hatchets, it still survives,—that is, the fallacy of his visit to Mary Phillipse at the Manor House here, and of his passage through Tarrytown at that time. Otherwise the article referred to is in the main historically correct, in so far as it relates to the journey from Alexandria, Virginia, to Boston, via of New York, where he unquestionably was the guest of Col. Beverly Robinson, but it was at his house in the city, and not at his country-seat in the Highlands, where he was entertained, on that occasion. But the writer referred to has strangely fallen into another error, for this journey of Washington was not undertaken in the summer of 1756, the cold facts of history informing us that it was on the 4th day of February that he set out,—his own diary, in which the minute details of events in each day's progress are carefully recorded, with all the particularity so

characteristic of him, is the unquestioned authority for this statement—and that he reached Alexandria on the 23d of March on his return. However it sets forth our hero in such glowing colors, and makes such a pretty picture of his robust manhood that the whole story is here given, phantasy as well as fact, as follows:

“The disputes as to relative rank between officers bearing the royal commission and those appointed by the Colonial Governors assumed such shape and importance that in the year 1756 Washington, who had been duly commissioned by the Governor as commander of the Virginia troops, found his authority as such disputed by a Captain of British regulars whose force did not exceed thirty men. This absurd assumption brought the affair to an issue. Washington was deputed by the authorities of Virginia to lay the whole matter before General Shirley, then Commander-in-chief of the royal forces with headquarters at Boston, in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

“In the summer of 1756, accompanied by his aids, Captain Mercer, and Captain Stewart, and a retinue of such as well became his wealth, rank, and official errand, Washington started northward on his mission.

“Their five-hundred miles journey, from Virginia, was on horse-back, attended by their black servants in livery—the equipments for the same as well as the housings of Washington's horses, being sent from London per order, and emblazoned with the Washington arms. In their progress they made a sensation in the country, as well by the clattering of the hoofs of their steeds in the streets of Philadelphia, New York and Boston.

“No man was more widely or more favorably known throughout the colonies. The hero of Fort Duquesne, whom the Indians believed to bear a charmed life, had a personal presence and dignity of bearing which commended him to the favor of those among whom he now came for the first time. The most distinguished honors and hospitalities were showered upon him at every point on his journey. * * * * *

“Arriving at New York, the party were entertained for some days at the house of Beverly Robinson in the Highlands. Robinson, a native of Virginia, had lately married Susannah, the eldest

daughter of Frederick Phillipse, owner of the Manor of Phillipseburgh, an estate granted to his grandfather by Governor Fletcher, which comprised a great portion of Westchester County and parts of Dutchess and Putnam. The entail, however, had been broken by the now obsolete legal process known as fine and common recovery, and the estate divided among the heirs at law, among whom was Mary Phillipse, sister of Mrs. Robinson and heiress in her own right of fifty thousand acres of land. Beautiful, and accomplished, this young heiress is credited in the gossip of the day with having proved so attractive to Washington that he not only tarried for several days on his way to Boston, but that on his return he sought the fair damsel and lingered under the spell of her charms. Some assert even that he made her an offer of marriage, which was rejected."

WASHINGTON'S FIRST APPEARANCE AT TARRYTOWN.

Putting aside this romantic tradition, the first well authenticated appearance of Washington at Tarrytown, and in this vicinity, was in the campaign of 1776, which included the disastrous retreat from Long Island, and ended with the battle of White Plains and the withdrawal of the Continental forces to New Jersey. On the 12th of July of that year, and while the main part of the army under Washington was yet encamped on Long Island, and his headquarters were in New York, two British Men-of-War, the *Phoenix* of 44, and the *Rose* of 20 guns, with their tenders, sailed up past the city of New York, and came to anchor that evening off Tarrytown, causing thereby no little consternation to the inhabitants, and some anxiety to the Commander-in-Chief. The object of the enemy was doubtless to encourage those favorably inclined to declare themselves for the King; but if so, they must have been badly disappointed, as means were at once taken for active resistance, there being evidence that Lieut. Col. Hammond that very night ordered out his forces to meet the enemy, making his headquarters at the noted Van Tassel Tavern, now the residence of Mr. Jacob Mott. The following official communication sent by Lieut. Col. Hammond to Gen. Washington, dated Tarrytown, July 15th, 1776, is in this connection of interest:

TARRYTOWN, July 15, 1776.

May it please your Excellency to take into account our humble petition. Whereas, two of the enemy's ships of war with their barges and tenders are arrived up the North River as far as Tarrytown, we suppose with a hostile design to distress us; with the concurrence of the Congress and assistance of the Committee, and by the forwardness of a number of volunteers; a considerable number of people are collected to our assistance, most of whom are very anxious about their harvests, which are now fit for collection, and in a suffering condition for want of laborers. We therefore humbly petition your Excellency to send us such a number of troops as your Excellency shall judge proper, to rescue the inhabitants up and down the river from the cruel designs of the enemy. As to farther particulars must beg leave to refer your Excellency to the bearer, Capt. (William) Dutcher.

JAS. HAMMOND,

Lieut.-Col. First Battalion of Militia in Westchester County.

To the Hon. GEO. WASHINGTON, Esquire.

The frigates sailed away up the river to the Highlands on July 16th, and returned about Aug. 3d to this place. On the 6th of August Col. Thomas sent a communication to Washington showing the desirability of having some breastworks thrown up here in which to place cannon to aid the galleys in an anticipated attack upon the British Men-of-War. That attack took place on the 8th of August, and was a gallant affair, resulting however in a drawn battle. It was doubtless during that time that the earthworks were thrown up on the place lately owned by Mr. C. W. Smith, just to the south of Tarrytown, some vestiges of which still remain.

In the meantime Long Island had been evacuated, and after the battle of Harlem Plains the backward movement of the Continental army continued until it finally took position near White Plains, where it engaged in unequal contest with the enemy on October the 28th.

Immediately preceding the latter event still more vigorous measures had been taken for the defence of Tarrytown, it being now on the right flank of the Continental lines, and during that period it is believed that Washington was repeatedly here. Well preserved tradition has it that on one of these occasions, together

with his Staff, a brilliant array of officers, he took a position for observation on Wolf Hill, near the present residence of Col. Sigafus, which place has ever since been known as the Pine Tree Lot, a venerable pine still marking the spot near which he stood as he looked down possibly for the first time on the broad Tappan Zee, where safely rode at anchor the hostile British frigates. It must have been to him a vision which he would not be likely to soon forget.

Washington may at one time have considered the moving of the main army in this direction, and so perhaps do battle here, but he finally decided on the Fabian policy of falling back to the North Castle hills. In any event, however, his right must be protected. It was then, just before the battle of White Plains, and while his headquarters were at the Miller House, on the east side of, and near the Bronx, by the Lower Cross Roads to the Plains, and only a short distance from our borders, that on one occasion he certainly was at the famous Davids (Wm. Davids) house, on and between the old White Plains and the Bedford Roads, which is still standing, now owned and occupied by Mr. Abram D. Stephens, a lineal descendant of the Revolutionary Davids, where he held a consultation or council of war with Col. Hammond and other officers, in regard to the military situation here, and what measures should be adopted for offensive and defensive warfare. It was in the large west room of that house that the council was held, and around a table which is still preserved in the family. The late Aunt Betsey See, who was a Davids, and born in that house, is the unquestioned authority for this statement in regard to that appearance of Washington at Tarrytown.

As an incident of his presence there at that time, it is stated that a small lad of a related family, named James Vail, afterwards the father of the late Hammond Vail, and grandfather of Mr. J. H. Vail of Washington St., who happened to be present, received the gift of a silver dollar from Washington, who was much amused at the little fellow's ineffectual efforts to properly speak his name, which, owing to an impediment in his speech, he pronounced *Washing-tub* ! That dollar was for a long time a

treasured keepsake in the family, and would now, we take it, be gladly redeemed at par by the Treasurer of the Tarrytown Historical Society ! All this is substantiated by the recollection of Mrs. Jas. Hawes, who had often heard her aged aunt tell the story. Washington is also said to have repeatedly visited Kaak-out, nearby, as related by the older citizens in days of yore.

As the result of this visit of Washington to the Davids house earthworks were then thrown up on the rise of ground to the westward, which was thereafter long known as the Breastworks Lot ; and also on Jones Hill, to the north, near and on the property of Col. Kent, the clearly defined outlines of which are still to be seen. It was during this period, and perhaps on his return from this very reconnoissance to the David's house that Washington came near being captured at the house of Col. Hammond, which is still standing, being the first house beyond the brick school house, and on the north side of the road, this side, to the west, of Mr. Robert Bonner's, whose farm as well as the Reynold's place, were formerly parts of Col. Hammond's possessions. The story is told as follows, by Aunt Betsey See, as appears in Bolton's History of Westchester County :

ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE WASHINGTON.

" Col. Hammond lived in the first house on the right hand side of the road leading from Tarrytown to White Plains (the Lower Cross Road) just beyond the brick school house, directly west of Mr. Bonner's farm. The house used to have tall pine trees and very old box borders in front ; it is now owned by Mr. Kingsland. A part of the American Army under his command had been lying in front on the fine plateau. General Washington came one day to consult with him and staid quite late in the evening after which he returned to his headquarters near White Plains. The army had also been withdrawn and the Colonel was left alone for the night. Just before daybreak the Colonel's wife was awakened by a heavy rumbling noise, and she awoke her husband, but he thought it was only distant thunder. Soon it became louder and louder, and then it stopped directly opposite their house. This was followed by loud rapping at the door and

demands to open. The Col. dressed as quickly as possible, and as he opened the door, several English soldiers demanded his surrender and all within. The Colonel replied, 'I do surrender and all with me.' They then demanded, 'Where is Gen. Washington?' The Col. replied, 'He left yesterday evening.' Upon looking out of the door he saw two small field pieces planted directly opposite. They were much disappointed but took him to Brooklyn a prisoner, where he remained for a year. The truth was, a loyalist woman living in the neighborhood had seen Gen. Washington go there and immediately starting on foot for the English lines had come back with the company. On being asked who she was, with a toss of the head and considerable contempt Aunt Betsey replied, 'One Anna Bussey—a good for nothing old thing!'

The unequal and undecisive battle of White Plains occurred Oct. 28th, and as bearing upon possibilities growing out of it, and as of local interest in itself, the following extract from a letter written by John McKesson, Esq., Sec'y to the N. Y. Convention, dated at Fishkill, Oct. 30th, while the two armies still lay opposite each other, and sent by Convention Rider in haste to General Clinton, copied from the celebrated Clinton papers, and heretofore unpublished, is herewith given, or rather extended extracts from it:

DEAR GENERAL:—I gratefully acknowledge your favor of yesterday. I published the two first pages, and shall consider the third. Major Strang, arrived here this evening, has given us all the information in his power of the action on the 28th, and the present situation of both armies. The enemy have gained so much westing and northing by the late stretches that you cannot prevent their extending to Hudson River, and agreeably to my former conjectures mentioned in my letter, cut off your communications with Mt. Washington. From Maj. Strang's observations Lord Sterling's present ground near or west of Young's House, is not the most advantageous. From the description of the face of the country given by Maj. Strang and some of the members of Convention, Bald Hill, near David's, 1 1-2 or 2 miles north of west of Youngs, should be immediately occupied. From thence is a curved chain of hills trending East, or rather North East, afterwards E. N. E., through which is only one natural nar-

row pass on the road which leads from Youngs. From Bald Hill to Hudson River, near Phillipse Upper Mills, is pretty high ground, a little more than a mile; and from Bald Hill is a chain of hills, or rather high ground running South West on the west side of Brunson's, or Saw Mill River. If the enemy could be confined within the hills west of Saw Mill River, it would keep open your communication with Tarrytown and keep them at a distance from Hudson River. From every account Bald Hill should be examined by some General officer, that if important it should be secured, &c.

Bald Hill was perhaps another name for Kaak-out, at least its location nearly conforms to the description given. Other counsels however prevailed, and so the defeated army of Patriots marched away and dwindled away, while Gen. Howe, with little material fruit of victory returned leisurely to New York. That it had been a period of great anxiety and depression to Washington is well evinced by the following extract from a private letter written by him to his brother, at Hackensack, date of Nov. 19. He says: "I am wearied almost to death with the retrograde motion of things, and I solemnly protest that a reward of 20,000 lbs. a year would not induce me to undergo what I do, and after all perhaps lose my character; as it is impossible under such a variety of distressing circumstances to conduct matters agreeably to public expectation."

The iron had already entered into his soul, but his character grew nobler under all these trials, and other and greater ones that were before him.

TARRYTOWN DURING THE REVOLUTION.

But to take a retrospective view of Tarrytown as it was during this stormy period. Commencing as far southward on the old post road as Abbotsford, was the now historic Odell Tavern, an old stone hostelry of pre-Revolutionary construction, from which its then owner, Jonathan Odell, the great-grandfather of Hon. N. Holmes Odell of this place, was rudely taken and confined, with some of his Patriot neighbors, in the old Sugar House Prison, New York. At the present village of Irvington, was the homestead of that sturdy Patriot, Capt. Wm. Dutcher; next to

the northward, that of Abraham Acker, 2d, who took up arms in the cause of the Colonies, and taken prisoner, was for a time incarcerated in the noted Sugar House, New York ; then we come to the residence of that valiant son of Mars, Major Jacob Van Tassel, who troubled the enemy not a little with his midnight sallies and the vigorous defence of his Castle with his celebrated Goose Gun, making Wolfert's Roost,—the future "Sunnyside," forever historic ground. Then came the homestead of Stephen Acker, a patriot partisan, and Glode Requa, a Captain in the Westchester County levies; then Geo. Hepworth, John Van Wart, Wm. Hunt, Wm. Van Wart, Thos. Wyld, who, it is said, was killed in the battle of White Plains, (his farm being largely the Benedict and Cobb estate;) then Abram Reviere, who lived in the present D. O. Archer house, and had a blacksmith shop on the site of the present Savings Bank ; Geo. Combs, who lived opposite, on the present Dean corner, and who was appointed Commissary of the troops at Tarrytown under command of Col. Hammond, by the N. Y. Convention date of July 16, 1776, and was also commissioned as Captain on June 16, 1778, and was a prominent citizen ; on the opposite, the North West corner of the Post Road (now Broadway) and the road to Martling's Landing, was the residence and Inn of Edward Couenhoven, who with his wife Annatje Roome Couenhoven, had united with the old Dutch Church by certificate from the Reformed Church in New York date of Oct. 1, 1772. The plot comprised altogether 18 acres, and extended down as far as the present Orchard Street. On the opposite side of the highway to the eastward—there was then no Upper Main Street—was the homestead of John Van Tassell, comprising 160 acres, the residence, which had a wide reputation as the Van Tassel Inn, being the present homestead of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Mott. John Van Tassell was a volunteer in Col. Hammond's Regiment. Then came the lands of Michael McKeel, 327 acres, whose residence, off from the highway, was on the present Chas. J. Gould place ; and to the northward of that, the celebrated Wm. Davids place; to the eastward on the old White Plains Road the Isaac Reed place, where the captors of Major Andre stopped for an hour with their prisoner on that

eventful and ever to be remembered 23d of September, 1780; and then to the northward and westward of the Davids place, the lands adjoining the Phillipse Castle—Manor House, which appear after the enforced retirement of Frederick Phillipse to have been occupied by one Wm. Pugsley, from whom it was transferred by the Commissioners of Forfeiture in 1785 to General Beekman, and so became the celebrated Beekman estate. Then there was a small settlement at the Landing—Martling's—of less than a dozen houses, where lived Capt. Daniel Martling, and his brother Isaac, who was "inhumanly slain," Capt. Drake, and the family of Buice and others. And this is all there was then of Tarrytown, a hamlet of perhaps something less than a hundred souls.

During this trying period it is wonderful how on this Debatable and Bloody Ground the existence of the forms of law and order and civil government were preserved. For instance we read from the old records of the Phillipsburg Manor of that time, as follows :

"Memorandum of all Public Officers appointed and chosen at a Town Meeting *held as usual*, in the Manor, the 6th day of April, 1779, and in the third year of our Independency."

The "third year of our Independency" is good. These Dutch burghers evidently had no thought of surrendering to the enemy.

WASHINGTON'S NEXT APPEARANCE HERE.

Washington next appeared at Tarrytown in the memorable campaign of 1781. After conference with De Rochambeau and a plan of operations agreed upon at Wethersfield in May of that year, the allied armies were marshalled for an advance upon the city of New York, Washington's right resting on the Hudson at Peekskill, and the French forces on his left. At 3 o'clock on the morning of July 2d, the Continental troops were put in motion, it is said by Gordon, with each a clean shirt and 4 days' cooked provisions in their haversacks. The allies moved forward two or three days later. Washington gives the following account in his Diary of this day's march :

"At 3 o'clock this morning I commenced my march with the

Continental army, in order to cover the detached troops, and improve any advantage which might be gained by them. I made a small halt at the New Bridge over Croton, about 9 miles from Peekskill; another at the Church by Tarrytown, till dusk (9 miles more) and completed the remaining part of the march in the night, arriving at Valentine's Hill (Mile Square) about sunrise."

There were with Washington in this march through Tarrytown, the following Regiments, as will be noticed, all New England troops: The 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th and 5th Conn., having the right of the line, under Maj. Gen. Heath; the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th Mass., under Maj. Gen. Lord Stirling, and Gen. Lincoln; 1st Rhode Island, 1st and 2d N. H., under Gen. Parsons; the Artillery under Gens. Knox and Duportail; also Col. Sheldon's Legion and Gen. Waterbury's Light Infantry.

And so Washington and his army marched through Tarrytown on the evening of July 2d, 1781, after resting themselves at the Old Dutch Church, some authorities say, for two hours, for the march was wearisome even to veteran troops that hot summer day, and it was a cool resting place on the banks of the Pocantico. The crossing was then at the old bridge, quite a turn up the stream from below the Church, where the old road wound around to the eastward and northward, the remains of the abutments being as yet easily discerned, that on the east bank being on the present Brombacker property; and so they passed over, and up the old highway through the now Wm. Grace lot, and the Anderson (now John Webber) place, to the brow of the hill just east of the Wallace house, (near where the old School house stood,) then veering south by west into our present Broadway. The Troop of Horse had already preceded, and the skirmish line was skirting the hillsides; and now the grim and rugged Continentals in the dusk of evening go marching by. No flash of spears or gleam of helmets is in that array, but on their breasts shine unseen shields all glistening white, the armor of brave and patriot hearts. The sons of the Pilgrims and the Puritans, the heroes of Saratoga, and Trenton, and Brandywine, and Valley Forge, marched there that night, and chief among them all was Washington. And with what earnest purposeful intent to overcome

the foe, they marched. The country had grown weary of the long protracted war, and none so longed for the return of peace, as the soldier. Yet still it was "Liberty or Death!" What a scene to have beholden, Washington and the Continental Army marching through Tarrytown!

But Washington's hopes in the direction of New York were to be sorely disappointed. The anticipated surprise of the enemy, to accomplish which this extraordinary march of 30 miles or more was made that day and night, failed of fruition by reason of the activity of the Tory Scouts who hovered in the advance, and only a reconnoissance in force was the result. Promised re-enforcements failed to arrive, and the French allies, comprising the flower of the French army of that time were disappointed though remaining steadfast. To outward appearances it was a grand pic-nic on the Greenburgh hills with just enough of skirmishing for spice, but how sore Washington was at heart is well depicted by the following record transcribed from the original preserved in the archives in the office of the Secretary of State:

July 20, 1781—Count de Rochambeau having called upon me, in the name of Count de Barras, for a definitive plan of campaign, that he might communicate it to the Count de Grasse, I could not but acknowledge, that the uncertainties under which we labor—the few men who have joined (either as recruits for the Continental Batteries or Militia)—and the ignorance in which I am kept by some of the States on whom I mostly depended, especially Massachusetts, from whose Gov. I have not received a line since I addressed him from Weathersfield, the 23d of May last, rendered it impracticable for me do more than to prepare, first, for the enterprize against New York as agreed to at Weathersfield. And secondly, for the relief of the Southern States, if after all my efforts, and earnest application to these States it should be found at the arrival of Count de Grasse that I had neither men, nor means adequate to the first object—to give this opinion I was further induced from the uncertainty with respect to the time of the arrival of the French Fleet, and whether Land Troops would come in it or not as has been earnestly requested by me and inforced by the Minister of France.

The uncertainty of sufficient aids of men and means from the States to whom application had been made and the discouraging

prospect before me of having my requisitions complied with, added to an unwillingness to incur any expense that could be avoided induced me to desire Gen. Knox to suspend the transport of the heavy cannon and stores from Philadelphia lest we should have them to carry back again or be encumbered with them in the field.

We quote the following brief extract from the diary of a French officer who gives an exceedingly interesting account of all this campaign translated by Rev. Dr. Todd, characterizing the army and its Commander-in-Chief :

"I cannot repeat too often how greatly I have been surprised at the American Army; it is inconceivable that troops almost naked, poorly paid, comprising old men, boys, and negroes, should march equally well on the road and under fire. I hardly need to speak of the coolness of Gen. Washington; it is known; but this great man is a thousand times greater and more noble at the head of his army than at any other time." And again: "I was astonished at the manner in which they marched. Perfect silence and order reigned, to which they added the greatest celerity."

It was during this period that the so called "Action at Tarrytown" took place, which was so well described by Dr. Coutant, our President, in a paper recently read before this Society, on Capt. Hurlbut, who was on that occasion seriously wounded.

And now at last, after these tentative and trying days of waiting, the arrival of re-enforcements for Gen. Howe, and the failure to receive those promised him, decides Washington to undertake the great historic movement which resulted in the surrender of Cornwallis. It was as if he challenged his fate, and Irving well and graphically says that "his soul was in arms," as he turned his face toward Yorktown.

The following transcript from Washington's Diary, made from the original in the office of the Secretary of State, for this use, gives the order of march of the troops with Washington passing through here on the 19th of August 1781 :

The want of horses, or bad condition of them in the French army delayed the march till this day. The same causes, it is to be feared, will occasion a slow and disagreeable march to Elk if fresh horses cannot be procured or better management of them adopted.

The detachment from the Americans is composed of the Light Infantry under Scammell—two light companies of York to be joined by the like number from the Connecticut line—the remainder of the Jersey line—two Regiments of York—Hazen's Regiment and the Regiment of Rhode Island—together with Lamb's Regiment of Artillery with cannon and other ordnance for the field and siege.

Hazen's Regiment being thrown over at Dobbs Ferry, was ordered with the Jersey troops to march and take Post on the heights between Springfield and Chatham, and cover a French Bakery at the latter place to veil our real movement and create apprehension for Staten Island.

The Quarter Master Gen'l was dispatched to King's ferry, the only secure passage, to prepare for the speedy transportation of Troops across the River.

Passed Singing with the American column—The French column marched by the way of Northeastle, Crompond, and Pines-bridge, being near ten miles further.

20th. The head of the Americans arrived at King's ferry about ten o'clock and immediately began to cross.

And so the return march of the army with Washington was made through Tarrytown. How often the story has been told us of the marching of the troops, of La Fayette at Brandywine, of Washington at Valley Forge and Yorktown, by one who marched that day, a veteran soldier who was of the "Forlorn Hope," one of the immortal 300 who with empty muskets successfully charged with the bayonet the redoubt in front of the American army at Yorktown on the night of Oct. 14th, 1781, under command of Gen. Alexander Hamilton, and which compelled the speedy surrender of Cornwallis.

There are other well authenticated incidents of Washington in Tarrytown which should be recorded, while the army lay at Dobbs Ferry and on the hills near here in that summer of '81. One, his visit to a sick or wounded officer, possibly Capt. Hurlbut,—at the then Van Tassel Hostelry, now residence of our venerable friend, Mr. Jacob Mott,—one of the oldest and most interesting houses in this place, which on one occasion received the compliment of a cannon ball from the British fleet. Mr. and Mrs. Mott remember well a Mrs. Romer, who lived in later times with her son-in-law, "Billy" Williams, who had a shoe shop in

the present Savings Bank Building, telling how she had twice seen Washington at the then Van Tassel Inn, where he had come to see this officer, and that he was in the south-west corner room, the present parlor.

Mrs. Ann Couenhoven Sebring, who was a daughter of Edward and Ann Couenhoven, born 1769, and died Aug. 24, 1849, used to tell of seeing Washington at her father's Inn, the late Martin Smith House, corner of Broadway and Main St., and on one occasion she remembered sitting on his knee, being at that time, probably 1781, a girl of 12 or 13 years. She is remembered as a very interesting old lady, and her memorial stone can be seen near the north-west corner of the old Dutch Church, her grave being close between that of her father and mother, who entertained Washington again, and as will be seen at a later date than she mentioned.

WASHINGTON'S LAST VISIT TO TARRYTOWN.

The following is a literal transcript from the diary of Lieut. Gov. Pierre Van Cortlandt, giving the record of Washington's final visit to Tarrytown, on the 19th of November, 1783, the original of which, now in the possession of Mrs. C. E. Van Cortlandt of the old Manor House at Croton Landing, having recently been in our hands for that purpose:

I went from Peekskill Tuesday, the 18th of November, in company with his Excellency, Governor Clinton, Col. Benson, and Col. Campbell; lodged that night with Gen. (his son Phillip) Cortlandt at Croton river; proceeded, and lodged Wednesday night at Edw. Couenhoven's, where we met His Excellency, Gen. Washington and his Aids; the next night lodged with Mr. Fred K. Van Cortlandt, at The Yonkers, after having dined with Gen. Lewis Morris. Friday morning, in company with the Commander-in-chief, as far as the Widow Day's, at Harlem, where we held a Council. Saturday, I rode down to Mr. Stuyvesant's. (His brother-in-law's.) Stayed there until Tuesday; then rode triumphant into the City with the Commander-in-Chief.

Washington had evidently come down in advance of the Governor and his party, quite probably with Gen. Knox and the Light Infantry, on their way from West Point to participate in the ceremonies of evacuation—in the triumphal entry into the city

of New York. He had come leisurely on his way, and as he drew near Tarrytown, his memory may well have recurred to stirring scenes in the past with which this place was associated, to his own personal experiences in war times here and near at hand. As he came in view of the Old Dutch Church, he remembered the marching of the troops that sultry summer day and the welcome rest there. As he beheld the old Phillipse Manor House near by, and which while stationed here it is said he had on repeated occasions visited, he may have thought of the fair daughter of its former owner, whose suitor if accepted he had been, how it might have changed the current of his life and hers; how the broad acres of this Manor untainted of treason might then have been his own.

We say he might have thought of all this as he passed that way, and then as he came nearer and to the spot, and crossed the little stream which proved the fatal Rubicon to Major Andre, the vision of that drama may well have vividly appeared to him—that thrilling drama in the right acting of which three Tarrytown Patriots—Paulding, Williams and Van Wart—were forever immortalized. He remembered them, and called them clearly to mind, for he had personally presented them with their Medals of Award, and had honored them with seats at his table. And on the shaft that rises there to-day to perpetuate the memory of that event is engraved with pen of steel the words of Washington, forever striking dumb the tongue of calumny, and heralding their fair fame:

“Their conduct merits our warmest esteem.”—WASHINGTON.

And so for this the last time Washington came to Tarrytown, and in company with his Aids stopped at the well-kept hostelry of Edward Couenhoven, a place not unfamiliar to him. And there, as is recorded, he met Governor Clinton and Lieut.-Gov. Van Cortlandt and their staffs. What a courtly meeting that was may well be imagined. The Revolutionary war successfully ended, Independence was achieved, and now the Commander-in-Chief was to meet the Governor of this State, and so journey on together with imposing retinue and triumphal procession to the city of New York. We may be assured that all the punctillious

military and courtly etiquette of those times was scrupulously observed on that occasion, and there never was before nor since such a stately affair in Tarrytown.

We may picture General Washington with his brilliant array of officers that day. Among his Aids was Col. David Cobb, of Massachusetts, a graduate of Harvard, Delegate to the Provincial Congress, afterwards Lieut. Governor—a brave soldier and a cultured gentleman; Col. David Humphreys, of Connecticut, the intimate companion and specially trusted friend of Washington, a learned Doctor of Laws, Historian, Poet, afterwards Ambassador to the courts of Portugal and Spain; the brilliant McHenry and the fiery Tilghman of Maryland; Col. Webb, a distinguished son of Connecticut; Gen. Knox, afterwards Secretary of War; Col. Wm. S. Smith, a graduate of Princeton, former Aid to Sullivan and LaFayette, in 1784 Secretary of Legation to London, where he married Abigail Adams, only daughter of John Adams, then Minister to England and afterwards President of the United States—Surveyor of the Port of New York, U. S. Marshal, President of the Society of Cincinnati and Member of Congress; and Baron Steuben, Inspector General of the Continental army, distinguished as formerly an Aid to Frederick the Great, was probably also present.

It was such a distinguished military suite that turned out with Washington in knightly array to meet the great war Governor of this State, and the Lieut.-Governor and their retinue as they rode into Tarrytown that day.

Governor and General George Clinton was himself one of the conspicuous and foremost men of that time. As a youth of only 17 he had joined a privateer on the high seas, and at 19 won distinction as a Lieutenant in the successful expedition under Col. Bradstreet against Fort Frontenac. Was successively Surrogate, Member of the Provincial Assembly 1775, in 1776 a Brigadier General in the Continental army, 1777 to 1795 Governor of this State, President of the Convention to deliberate on the Federal Constitution, Governor again from 1801 to 1804, then for two terms Vice President of the United States. This was the then

Governor and General George Clinton, eminent as a soldier and as a civilian, none more so in the history of this State.

And then there was Lieut.-Gov. and Gen. Pierre Van Cortlandt, who, spurning the seductions of the Loyalist Gov. Tryon, had bravely risked his fortune and his all in the cause of the struggling Colonies. A patriarch with the benignant mien of a Franklin,—of pure and blameless life, and unsullied character,—a Patriot indeed. For 18 years he filled the office of Lieut.-Governor with honor. Also during much of the early war period acted as President of the Provincial Congress of this State.

And there were their Aids: Col. Robert Benson, the able Secretary of the Provincial Congress, and Private Secretary of the Governor, afterwards prominent in public affairs, Col. Campbell, probably Col. Samuel of Cherry Valley, and others.

This was the personnel, as near as may be, of the official party that met that day in Tarrytown, with Washington peerless above them all. And they were guests at the modest inn of Edward Couenhoven, corner of Main Street and Broadway, since called Washington Place, in honor of that event. The hillsides meanwhile were gay with the cavalcade of light infantry and troopers that acted as escort. And the next day they went on together, an imposing cavalcade in the direction of Yonkers and New York. So they rode away, Gov. Clinton, coming to his own; Washington, thoughtful of the morrow, of the sad parting with his comrades-at-arms, and of the great labor which yet remained of welding the independent States into a Nation.

This in brief, is the story of Washington at Tarrytown. And every highway and byway over which he so marched, and every place where his feet so rested, is lifted up to the heroics; it is no longer common ground. His name and fame are thus indissolubly connected with this place, and in some spot so forever associated with the thought of his august personality and presence, should be the future home of this Society.

“WASHINGTON AT TARRYTOWN.”

In accordance with the vote and kindly request of the Tarrytown Historical Society, the paper read by Mr. M. D. Raymond on the above subject at the meeting of that Society held on the 16th of December, is herewith published. The subject was comparatively new to the writer until the recent invitation to prepare a paper upon it had been accepted, and whatever it may lack in fullness of detail may in part at least be charged over to account of such limitations. It was found an interesting subject, and one which might be still further pursued.

The romance connected with the subject is touched upon as well as the authenticated facts of history, and the few remaining local traditions have been gathered up as best they might be, but alas, how many are hopelessly lost in the mazes of the past. To many of the residents of this vicinage during the Revolutionary period, Washington was a familiar figure; they had seen him on various occasions as he passed by, and some doubtless had personally known him. He was here and there from time to time, as those who saw him remembered well, and in after years they had often told the story, but with their lives almost perished the memory of what had been to them such a distinct realism—only here and there a fragment of the narrative being preserved; but for these we are thankful, and now some of them so remaining are grouped together in this historical paper.

The writer is indebted for information on this subject, to many sources; but first and foremost he is under obligation, and the Tarrytown Historical Society and the public are under great obligations, to Lieut. Gov. Van Cortlandt, for his making that memorandum of the meeting here, at Edward Couenhoven's, Tarrytown, of Gov. Clinton and himself with Washington and his Aids, on the evening of Wednesday, Nov. 19th, 1783, and to Mrs. C. E. Van Cortlandt of the Manor House, for finding and preserving that to us important data without which an interesting chapter in the sketch of “Washington at Tarrytown” could

never have been written, but which will now be forever so preserved.

In this connection we would make acknowledgment to Mrs. Van Cortlandt for personal courtesy and helpfulness in this matter, and also to many others. To Dr. Coutant, for use of his valuable library and unstinted personal assistance ; to Col. Kent, for use of his rare historical volumes and his kindly aid ; State Librarian Howell ; the N. Y. Historical Society ; Mrs. Lamb, and the *American Magazine of History* ; Mr. Benson Ferris ; Mrs. Beekman ; Miss Sirrene ; Elias Mann, Esq. ; Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Mott ; Rev. Dr. Todd, for his kindly aid and use of his library ; L. T. Yale, Esq., E. T. Lovatt, Esq., Mrs. James Hawes, A. D. Stephens, C. S. Davison, Esq., Hon. N. Holmes Odell, and many others.

We have adverted to the fact that Washington was personally known to at least some of those living here during the Revolution. As will be seen, Col. Hammond met him on several occasion, and once sent a communication to him by the hand of Capt. Dutcher. That was Capt. Wm. Dutcher, the great grandfather of Mr. Benson Ferris, who so carried a message to Washington with orders to explain matters more fully to him in person. Then Edward Couenhoven and his wife Annatje, entertained him at their Inn. Perhaps sometimes Edward was away from home on duty—for he was a soldier in Col. Hammond's Regt.—when Washington called, but his good Dutch vrow was there, and quite capable of attending to the duties of a generous host. By the way, they have a great grandson living in the person of Rev. Edward Conover, as the orthography of the name now is,—at Rutland, Vermont. And their son Jacob Couenhoven, married the sister of Mrs. Jane Tompkins Conkling, an estimable old lady who lives at the corner of Elizabeth and Washington St., who was a niece of Hon. Daniel D. Tompkins, distinguished as Governor of this State, and Vice President of the United States. Mrs. Conkling does not remember seeing Washington, but she does very well remember Isaac Van Wart, one of the Captors of Andre.

In this connection we are also pleased to note the fact that the Couenhoven family are now represented in Tarrytown by Mrs.

Edward Sebring, whose late husband, who died at Charleston, S. C., 1886, was a son of Ann Couenhoven Sebring, wife of Cornelius B. Sebring; and it was she who remembered Washington as already stated. Edward Sebring, who was so the grandson of Edward Couenhoven, was a prominent Banker in Charleston for many years, and much of the time his mother resided with him. She was always desirous to be buried when she died, in the old Dutch Church yard at Tarrytown, in the place reserved for her between her father and mother; which promise given was piously kept.

Mrs. Edward Sebring, above referred to, now of this place, confirms the story of Washington's visits to the Edward Couenhoven Inn, and adds the remembrance of a kiss on the cheek of the then fair little daughter, Ann Couenhoven. Mrs. Sebring is a cultured lady, and her family includes her daughter, and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Bassett, and a little grand daughter named Marie Couenhoven, a great-great-grand-daughter of Edward and Annatje Couenhoven, who entertained Washington here.

It may be of interest in this connection to state, that Governor George Clinton is at present represented in Tarrytown by a great-grandson in the person of George Clinton Andrews, Esq., and Lieut-Gov. Pierre Van Cortlandt is represented here by a great-granddaughter in the person of Mrs. Gertrude Beekman of North Tarrytown, while at least one of the Continental soldiers who marched through Tarrytown under Washington on the night of July 24, 1781, and again in return on the 19th of August of the same year, is represented here, in the person of the writer.

The portrait of Washington presented is after a Trumbull, which has been engraved in steel for the *American Magazine of History*,—the best possible attainable representing him as the Soldier of the Revolution, and at the age at which he appeared in Tarrytown. And so we will take final leave of "Washington at Tarrytown," as he did on that November day in 1783, trusting that his memory may linger here forever an inspiration for good, and a never fading picture in the picturesque past.—*Tarrytown Argus*, Dec. 27, 1890.

In the ARGUS of the same date appeared the following complimentary allusions to the foregoing paper from the pen of Rev. Dr. J. A. Todd:

"As one of those who had the privilege of being present at the meeting of the Tarrytown Historical Society last Tuesday evening, Dec. 16th, I cannot refrain from expressing my gratification and thanks to the gentlemen who gave us so much instruction and pleasure so delightfully combined.

"The paper of M. D. Raymond, Esq., presenting in connected narrative and appropriate setting, in the chronological succession of events, the story of Washington's visits and relations to Tarrytown during the Revolution, was one of remarkable interest, and it held the fixed attention of his audience from its opening to its close. By a resolution unanimously adopted he received the thanks of the Society for his important contribution to our historical knowledge, and also a request that he publish his paper in full in the columns of The Tarrytown ARGUS. As it will thus be given to the world, there is no occasion to attempt a statement of its contents here, further than to say, that it embraced all the facts hitherto known about Washington in Tarrytown, besides others, gleamed by indefatigable search, which had never before been brought to public notice.

"The unusual accuracy of detail, with day and date, the vividness of description, owing partly no doubt to the familiarity of his audience with the places described, but more largely to a certain poetic tinge in the language, and the fine enthusiasm of the speaker himself who was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of his theme, lent a pleasing attraction to the recital, which, Mr. Yale justly said, in moving a vote of thanks, must have been felt by every person in the assembly."





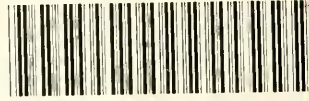




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